

Claims:

- 1) A method to facilitate procurement of information from a user operating a
5 computer, comprising:
- a) delivering information to the user from the computer prompting the user to
enter at the computer information identifying a project;
 - b) delivering information to the user from the computer prompting the user to
10 perform at the computer an action to specify a billing-related information
relating to the project;
 - c) delivering information to the user from the computer prompting the user to
provide to the computer information associated to the project but unrelated
to the billing-related information.
- 15 2) A method as defined in claim 1, wherein in response to the user
- i) providing information identifying the project;
 - ii) performing the action to specify the billing-related information;
and
 - iii) providing information-associated to the project but unrelated to the
20 billing-related information, the method further comprises:
 - (1) generating a first message including data identifying the project
and data specifying the billing-related information;
 - (2) generating a second message including at least a portion of the
information identifying the project and the information associated
25 to the project but unrelated to the billing-related information; and
 - (3) sending the first message and the second message to different
destinations.
- 3) A method as defined in claim 2, wherein the delivering of information to the
30 user from the computer prompting the user to enter at the computer
information identifying a project is done by displaying information on a
screen.

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✓ 4) A method as defined in claim 3, wherein the delivering of information to the user from the computer prompting the user to perform at the computer an action to specify a billing-related information relating to the project is done by displaying information on the screen.

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✓ 5) A method as defined in claim 4, wherein the delivering of information to the user from the computer prompting the user to provide to the computer information associated to the project but unrelated to the billing-related information is done by displaying information on the screen.

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✓ 6) A method as defined in claim 5 wherein the information identifying the project includes an identifier of a client.

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✓ 7) A method as defined in claim 6, wherein the information identifying the project includes a matter identifier.

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✓ 8) A method as defined in claim 6, wherein the user provides the information identifying the project through an input device selected in the group consisting of keyboard, pointing device, touch sensitive surface and speech recognition unit.

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✓ 9) A method as defined in claim 8, wherein the billing-related information includes information selected from the group consisting of time information and expense information.

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✓ 10) A method as defined in claim 8, wherein the billing-related information includes time information and wherein the action performed at the computer by the user to specify the time information includes entering through the input device a time interval.

✓ 11) A method as defined in claim 8, wherein the billing-related information includes time information and wherein the action performed at the computer by the user to specify the time information includes starting and stopping a clock through the input device.

(12) A method as defined in claim 7, wherein the providing of information associated to the project but unrelated to the billing-related information is done through the input device.

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(13) A method as defined in claim 1, wherein the information unrelated to the billing-related information is selected in the group consisting of marketing information, business development information, information regarding contact, project notes and information relating to an order process.

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(14) A method as defined in claim 2, wherein the second message is sent to a knowledge database.

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(15) A method as defined in claim 14, further comprising:

- a) delivering information to the user from the computer prompting the user to enter at the computer search criteria for searching the knowledge database;
- b) searching the knowledge database on the basis of the search criteria to derive matching information;
- c) delivering the matching information to the user with the computer.

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16) A computer readable storage medium containing a program element for execution by a CPU, said program element comprising:

- a) a first program element component for causing a computer to display first information to the user, the first information prompting the user to enter at a computer information identifying a project;
- b) a second program element component for causing the computer to display second information to the user, prompting the user to perform at the computer an action to specify billing-related information relating to the project;
- c) a third program element component for causing the computer to display third information to the user, prompting the user to provide to the computer information associated to the project but unrelated to the billing-related information.

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17) A computer readable storage medium as defined in claim 16, wherein said program element further comprises a message generator program element component responsive to data representative of information identifying the project, data representative of the billing-related information and data representative of information associated to the project but unrelated to the billing-related information, for:

- i) generating a first message including data identifying the project and data specifying the billing-related information;
- ii) generating a second message including at least a portion of the information identifying the project and the information associated to the project but unrelated to the billing-related information;
- iii) sending the first and the second message to different destinations.

18) A computer readable storage medium as defined in claim 17, wherein the CPU resides on a server machine and the computer is a client machine in a network arrangement with the server machine.

19) A computer readable storage medium as defined in claim 17, wherein the computer is a client machine in a network arrangement with a server machine and wherein the CPU resides in the computer.

20) A computer readable storage medium as defined in claim 18, wherein the first, second and third program element components generate control messages to the client machine to cause the client machine to display the first, second and third information to the user.

21) A computer readable storage medium as defined in claim 18, wherein the control messages are HTTP messages and the client machine displays the first, second and third information to the user through a browser.

22) A computer readable storage medium as defined in claim 21 wherein the information identifying the project includes an identifier of a client.

~7 23) A computer readable storage medium as defined in claim 20, wherein the information identifying the project includes a matter identifier.

5 24) A computer readable storage medium as defined in claim 17, wherein said program element includes a destination selector program element component for causing the computer to display fourth information to the user for allowing the user to select a destination for the second message.

~9 10 25) A computer readable storage medium as defined in claim 16, wherein the billing-related information includes information selected from the group consisting of time information and expense information.

~10 15 26) A computer readable storage medium as defined in claim 16, wherein the billing-related information includes time information and wherein the action performed at the computer by the user to specify the time information includes entering through the input device a time interval.

~11 20 27) A computer readable storage medium as defined in claim 16, wherein the billing-related information includes time information and wherein the action performed at the computer by the user to specify the time information includes starting and stopping a clock through the input device.

~14 25 28) A computer readable storage medium as defined in claim 17, wherein said message generator program element component directs the second message to a knowledge database.

~15 30 29) A computer readable storage medium as defined in claim 28, wherein said program element further comprises a fourth program element component for causing the computer to display fourth information to the user and prompting the user to provide to the computer a search criteria for searching the knowledge database.

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~15 30) A computer readable storage medium as defined in claim 29, wherein said program element includes a search engine to search the knowledge database on the basis of the search criteria to generate matching information.

5 31) A computer readable storage medium as defined in claim 30, wherein said fourth program element component causes the computer to display the matching information to the user.

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10 32) A computer readable storage medium as defined in claim 12, wherein the information unrelated to the billing-related information is selected in the group consisting of marketing information, business development information, information regarding contact, project notes and information relating to an order process.

15 33) A system to facilitate procurement of information from a user, comprising:

a) a computer;

b) a computer readable storage medium containing a program element for execution by a CPU, said program element including:

i) a first program element component for causing said computer to display first information to the user, the first information prompting the user to enter at said computer information identifying a project;

ii) a second program element component for causing said computer to display second information to the user, prompting the user to perform at said computer an action to specify a billing-related information;

iii) a third program element component for causing said computer to display third information to the user, prompting the user to provide to said computer information associated to the project but unrelated to the billing-related information.

30 34) A system as defined in claim 33, wherein said program element includes a message generator program element component responsive to data representative of information identifying the project, data representative of billing-related information and data representative of information associated to the project but unrelated to the billing-related information, for:

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- i) generating a first message including data identifying the project and data specifying billing-related information;
- ii) generating a second message including at least a portion of the information identifying the project and data specifying information associated to the project but unrelated to the billing-related information;
- iii) sending the first message and the second message to different destinations.

10 35) A system as defined in claim 34, comprising a server machine, said computer readable storage medium being located in said server machine, said server machine including a CPU for executing said program element.

15 36) A system as defined in claim 35, wherein said computer constitutes a client machine, said client machine being in a network arrangement with said server machine.

20 37) A system as defined in claim 36, wherein said client machine is operative to run a browser.

25 38) A system as defined in claim 37, wherein said first, second and third program element components send messages with said browser and cause said browser to display said first, second and third information to the user.

30 39) A system as defined in claim 37, wherein the billing-related information includes information selected from the group consisting of time information and expense information.

40) A system as defined in claim 37, wherein the billing-related information includes time information and wherein the action performed at the computer by the user to specify the time information includes entering through the input device a time interval.

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41) A system as defined in claim 37, wherein the billing-related information includes time information and wherein the action performed at the computer by the user to specify the time information includes starting and stopping a clock through the input device.

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42) A system as defined in claim 34, wherein said message generator program element component directs the second message to a knowledge database.

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43) A system as defined in claim 42, wherein said program element further comprises a fourth program element component for causing the computer to display fourth information to the user, prompting the user to provide to the computer a search criteria for searching the knowledge database.

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44) A system as defined in claim 43, wherein said program element includes a search engine to search the knowledge database on the basis of the search criteria to generate matching information

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45) A system as defined in claim 44, wherein said fourth program element component causes the computer to display the matching information to the user.

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46) A system as defined in claim 33, wherein the information unrelated to the billing-related information is selected in the group consisting of marketing information, business development information, information regarding contact, project notes and information relating to an order process.

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